



Citizens Project spotlights issues in the Pikes Peak region and mobilizes people to strengthen the traditional values of our nation: equal rights, individual freedoms, separation of church and state, civic engagement, and respect for diversity.

Press Release
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Citizens Project joins with area religious leaders to counter intolerance in our community.

COLORADO SPRINGS, CO-Pastor Fred Phelps and members of the Westboro Baptist Church (WBC) are planning to picket outside of City Hall, Poor Richard's Restaurant, and the Gay and Lesbian Fund for Colorado on March 24, 2005 beginning at 3:30pm. Phelps and the WBC are known for picketing against organizations supporting gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) issues.

In response to this most recent picket of the Phelps family, Citizens Project has worked with the Pikes Peak InterReligious Clergy Alliance to identify a diverse group of religious leaders that will speak to the question of faith and tolerance. The panel discussion will take place in City Council Chambers at City Hall from 3:30-5:00pm on March 24, during the Westboro Baptist Church's planned pickets.

Phelps visit to Palmer High School two weeks ago was met by an overwhelming number in our community participating in a counter protest at Acacia Park (estimates by organizers are a crowd of 800-1,000 individuals). "While the Westboro Baptist's Church's message is hateful, I am heartened by the dialogue his presence has encouraged in our community on an issue that often divides our city," notes Citizens Project Executive Director Ellie Collinson. "This open invitation for dialogue amongst religious leaders is testimony to the positive effect of negative events and represents a move towards greater understanding for the diverse perspectives in our community."

Confirmed members of the panel include: Reverend Don Armstrong-Grace Episcopal Church, Dr. Michael Saylor-First Baptist Church, Reverend Elder Nori Rost- Metropolitan Community Church, Sister Dorothy Schlaeger- Pikes Peak Justice and Peace Commission, Dr. Jim White – First Congregational Church, Melissa Fryrear- Focus on the Family Gender Policy Analyst, and Reverend Lawrence Palmer – Unity Church of the Rockies. Bruce Coriell, Colorado College Chaplain and member of the Pikes Peak InterReligious Clergy Alliance, will serve as the moderator for the panel. "Rejecting hate is a good start. The next step is asking if we can foster a community with a place for everyone," Coriell observed.

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zip-prefix	Number of Lett
803	10
804	3
805	6
808	66
809	654
810	8
811	2
812	4
815	1
833	1
845	1
852	2
857	2
864	2
877	1
900	3
902	1
920	1
926	1
927	1
930	1
931	1
941	6
946	1
950	1
954	1
958	1
972	1
973	1
981	2

39